

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ISSUES FOR JOINT COMMERCIAL COMMISSION MEETING--HOTEL
ROOMS FOR VISITING BUSINESSMEN

REF: MOSCOW 4108

1. IN RECENT MONTHS, PERENNIAL SHORTAGE OF HOTEL ROOMS IN MOSCOW HAS BECOME MORE SEVERE. WHEREAS SHORTAGES WERE PREVIOUSLY RESTRICTED TO SUMMER MONTHS AND PERIODS AROUND MAJOR HOLIDAYS (OR EVENTS SUCH AS PARTY CONGRESSES), AVAILABILITY OF HOTEL ROOMS HAS NOW BECOME YEAR -ROUND PROBLEM WHICH CAN ONLY, AT LEAST IN SHORT TERM, GROW WORSE.

2. SITUATION IS EXACERBATED BY INTOURIST'S APPARENT DISTASTE FOR BUSINESS VISITORS. THIS IS DEMONSTRATED, INTER ALIA, BY FACT THAT IT IS MUCH EASIER TO OBTAIN HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS IN MOSCOW IF YOU COME AS TOURIST THAN AS BUSINESSMAN. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, MANY OF REPS OF ACCREDITED U.S. COMPANIES REGARD HOTEL ROOM SHORTAGE AS MAJOR PROBLEM IN THEIR OPERATIONS HERE.

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3. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT AMEXCO IS IN PROCESS OF NEGOTIATING AGREEMENT WITH INTOURIST UNDER WHICH CERTAIN NUMBER OF ROOMS IN DOWNTOWN HOTELS WOULD BE BLOCKED OUT EXCLUSIVELY FOR AMEXCO'S BUSINESS CLIENTS. WE HAVE ENCOURAGED AMEXCO TO UNDERTAKE THIS PROJECT, WHICH, IF SOVIETS AGREE, WILL HELP ALLEVIATE DIFFICULTY.

4. IN VIEW FACT THAT INABILITY OF U.S. BUSINESSMEN TO VISIT MOSCOW DUE TO LACK OF HOTEL ROOMS CAN HAVE DEFINITE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON TRADE, EMBASSY PROPOSES THAT U.S. DELEGATION RAISE THIS PROBLEM AT JOINT COMMISSION MEETING. SUCH AN APPROACH MIGHT STRESS:

- A) U.S. COMPANIES HAVE COMPLAINED ABOUT PROBLEMS IN OBTAINING HOTEL ROOMS, CITING FACT THAT TOURISTS HAVE MUCH EASIER TIME;
 - B) AMEXCO IS TRYING TO WORK OUT ARRANGEMENTS WITH INTOURIST FOR BLOCK OF ROOMS TO BE ALLOCATED BY AMEXCO TO ITS BUSINESS CLIENTS;
 - C) WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE FOREIGN TRADE MINISTRY'S INTERVENTION WITH INTOURIST TO ENCOURAGE THAT ORGANIZATION:
 - (1) BE MORE FORTHCOMING ON MATTER OF HOTEL ROOMS FOR BUSINESSMEN; AND (2) REACH AGREEMENT WITH AMEXCO ON BLOCK-OF-ROOM PROPOSAL.
- STOESSEL

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